

Alumnae Testimonies

"Entering the Honors Program at Columbia College opened me to engagement in a larger dialogue with peers and an intellectual community who were equally invested in pursuing knowledge and innovative thought. Through an Honors Semester abroad in Swansea, Wales, I was able to both extend this intellectual dialogue to another country and expand my understanding of my discipline with the advantage of international approaches to literature. My participation during my four years in the Program, both in the United States and abroad, enriched my education as an undergraduate and prepared me for the rigors and rewards of graduate school and work in academia." ~DeAnna Ellis

- Every semester, I looked forward to the Honors conferences (Southern Regional and National). We travelled to interesting cities like New Orleans, Chicago, St. Louis, and had great opportunities to present on topics of our interest, meet Honors students from all over the country, and have a bonding experience within our own Honors Program.

- My Honors Senior Project was based on my accounting internship at the South Carolina Department of Revenue. I did research on the state income tax rules for resident and nonresident individuals. I am now a CPA and specialize in international taxation. Through my research project, I obtained knowledge that I still use in my everyday practice. ~Stanislava Fowler ('06)
Feel free to ask for elaboration or clarification!

My first memory of my participation in the honors program is when I presented at an honors conference concerning the constitutionality of the Citadel's then all-male policy. The experience was challenging, terrifying, exhilarating, and it inspired me to participate in as many Honors opportunities as Dr. Z saw fit to put in front of me. As a result of my participation in the CC Honors Program, I attended law school in the Northeast, excelled in my study of constitutional law, and have been blessed to work for the federal judiciary, in the public interest as a business and criminal trial attorney, and as a constitutional law professor. That first presentation was the first step in a life of learning, teaching, and exploring who we are and how we live.

I was the first Columbia College student to attend an NCHC Honors Semester. That Semester was my first trip to New York City as we sought to explore the impact of immigration on the cultural and political structure of American society. For the first time in my life, I was in a major metropolitan city, surrounded by world-class art, culture, high-finance, and ethnic diversity that was virtually non-existent in the South back then, or perhaps I was not as aware of or sensitive to the diversity around me at home. It was culture shock of the best kind, and Columbia College's Honors Program made it all possible. ~Tish Gotell Fauks ('04)

The Honors Program introduced me to the world of engaged learning. I gave presentations on a variety of different topics at conferences throughout the country. When I started graduate school at the University of Virginia, I was shocked to learn that this level of engagement is rare for undergraduates. The one-on-one interactions I had with faculty sparked my interest in working in higher education. In fact, I use the Program's model of challenge and support when working with my students at Georgetown University. ~Amanda Ruthven ('02)

When I joined the Honors Program at Columbia College, I never dreamed I would one day be a university professor, publishing my research and teaching my very own honors writing course! Under the guidance of Dr. Z, I collaborated with Honors faculty to conduct original research, presented my research at conferences, and learned alongside the brightest students at Columbia College. I now have a fulfilling, challenging career in academia because of the opportunities that Honors gave me. I am grateful, every day. ~Lori Mumpower ('98)

My time in the Honors Program at Columbia College consisted of some of the most challenging, exciting, and stimulating experiences I could have anticipated as an undergraduate. Whether it was the fun and intimate community we created our first weekend on campus or the heart-felt awards ceremony four years later, my time in honors was both supportive and inspiring. I think back on Dr. Z's seminars and other Honors coursework with fondness (especially Dr. Paula Shirley's Cuba Seminar), and I hope every student could be as lucky to experience the unique blend of support and stimulation you can only find in Honors.

Today, I have written three books (one published, two in contract), worked towards my PhD in English, and created a career out of the one thing I find most interesting--food and our relationship to it. It was in Honors that I discovered the role community plays in our development, and I like to believe that this perspective continues to inform my own work with every recipe I write or article I publish. Whether I'm writing about lobstermen off the coast of Rockland, Maine, or old Louisiana families and their gumbos passed down from each generation to the next, I find that it was my deep sense of community and its power that drives these works. Thank you, Dr. Z, for introducing me to the Honors community and showing what can really be gained when we join a group of women as stimulating as Honors itself. ~Helena Brigman ('08)

The Honors Program at Columbia College allowed me to grow into the woman I am today. Honors challenged me to reach my highest potential as a student and later as a professional. My experiences in the program facilitated my admission to law school and my current employment as a prosecutor at the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office. The confidence and competence I learned at Columbia College are things I use on a daily basis when I interact with judges, other attorneys, defendants, and victims. The emphasis on collaborative learning continues to help me see issues from different viewpoints, and the focus on creative thinking helps me find solutions to complex problems. I know I am a more well-rounded and efficient prosecutor today because of my experiences with the students and faculty in the Honors Program. ~Marina Emory ('09)

The highlights of my four years in Honors at Columbia College are broad, but together these opportunities enhanced my collegiate experience by intertwining academics and real-life events into powerful lessons. Honors courses themselves proved challenging, but small classes of engaged students and professors made for meaningful and experiential learning opportunities. My two favorite memories are time spent studying abroad and presenting at conferences.

During my sophomore year, I learned of an honors study-abroad experience in Swansea, Wales. Within a matter of weeks, Dr. Z helped me orchestrate the transfer of scholarships, grades, and myself overseas, broadening my world view and igniting my passion for traveling. Realizing that I moved to a foreign country without knowing a soul inspired me to make the most of my time abroad. Adapting to the vastly different 'big school' environment, exploring Europe, learning to

cook, and making the best of friends allowed me to recognize innate capabilities for exploration and growth within myself.

Honors also afforded me the unique opportunity to present at many National Collegiate Honors Council and Southern Regional Honors Council conferences. These symposiums honed my public speaking skills and provided ample opportunities for interacting with and learning from Honors students and faculty across the country.

After graduating from the Honors Program in 2008 with degrees in Business Administration and Accounting, I began working for the Corporate Audit department within Bank of America in Charlotte. Through a rotational management training program, I audited spaces across the country and later worked with senior Audit management to create executive reporting for our Audit Committee. Now a happily married homeowner with a one-year-old Weimaraner, I am a Senior Auditor II and recently returned to auditing the Consumer and Legacy Asset Servicing spaces. The Honors Program helped to prepare me for the corporate world – and post-college life in general – through an internship at Lloyds TSB in Wales as well as demanding coursework, dedicated faculty, and opportunities for broader learning outside of the classroom; for that, I am grateful. ~Chelsea Eichorn ('08)

I can honestly say that I would not be the woman I am today without Dr. Z and the Honors Program. My experience in the Honors Program helped me learn how to challenge myself, think outside the box and see the world in a whole new light. I use these skills everyday as a practicing attorney, and I am forever grateful for Dr. Z's encouragement, enthusiasm and genuine love. ~Kiosha Hammond Dickey ('04)